University of California San Diego

Literatures in English (LTEN) 128GS | British & Irish Poetry: 1900-present

Summer 2025 | Global Seminar | Edinburgh, UK

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The United Kingdom today has a diverse population, which is reflected in its vibrant poetry scene. This course surveys the current state of British poetry. It will look at how the tradition of western literature is being used to think about contemporary concerns, and it will keep returning to the question of what it means to be "British" in the 21st century.

Elements of this syllabus and the course are subject to change.

Lectures

Time: Mon, Tues, Wed 11a-1p
Location: *tbd*

Technology Policy: Use of smartphones is not permitted in lecture. Laptops and tablets are allowed.

You must have the day's text available in class either printed or on electronic device that is <u>not</u> your phone.

Office Hours

Given the varying schedule, I will offer weekly office hours on different days and times, announced at the start of each week. I am also available by appointment.

Assignments

You must fulfill *all* course requirements in order to pass the course. All times are local Edinburgh time.

- **Participation (30%)**
- **Poem Annotation Notes (10%)** – Will be checked once a week
- **Journal Responses (30%)** — 5 due within three days of discussing the poet
- **Concluding Presentations (10%)** — In-class, July 30
- **Reflective Essay (20%)** — Due July 30 @11:59pm

Course Texts

All texts are available as PDFs on Canvas.

Class Schedule: Topics & Readings

Week 1 (June 30 - July 2)

Mon | Program Orientation (led by IFSA-Butler)

Tues | Introduction & UK Poet Laureate

- Simon Armitage, selected poems from *Paper Aeroplanes*, *Sandettie Light Vessel Automatic*, & *Never Good With Horses*

  Armitage is the current UK Poet Laureate. He is known for the conversational style of his verse, his translations of English medieval texts, and his public poetry projects that embed poetry in the world.

Wed | UK Poet Laureate: Poems in the landscape

- Simon Armitage, "In Memory of Water" (aka Stanza Stones)

Week 2 (July 7-9)

Mon | Ecopoetics & the self

- Thomas A Clark, "paths & fruit"

  Clark is a Scottish poet focused on the beauty of the natural world in the Scottish Highlands and islands.

Tues | Home in the Highlands

- Thomas A Clark, selected poems from *Farm by the Shore* and *Threadbare*

Wed | The Sovereignty of Quiet

- Victoria Adukwei Bulley, selected poems from *Quiet*

  Bulley was born in Essex and maintains strong connections with her Ghanaian heritage. Quiet *shows what, to quote the epigraph from Kevin Quashie, "an aesthetic of quiet makes possible…a black subject in the undisputed dignity of its humanity."*

Week 3 (July 14-16)

Mon | Nature & Tradition

- Alice Oswald, selected poems from *Woods, etc* and *Falling Awake*

  Oswald, the current Oxford Professor of Poetry, is known for her concern for nature and the environment as well as her engagement with ancient Greek texts, such as Homer's Iliad *in* Memorial *and the* Odyssey *in* Nobody.

Tues | Spoken Word

- Kae Tempest, "Tiresias" from *Hold Your Own*

  Tempest's verse engages with the boundaries between genders. In Hold Your Own, *Tempest uses the Greek myth of Tiresias, the blind prophet of Thebes who lived as both a man and woman, to explore how gender affects one's life experiences. Recently Tempest changed pronouns to "they" and their name to Kae Tempest. Tempest's style is indebted to spoken word poetry and hip-hop.*

Wed | Garage MC

- Kayo Chingonyi, selected poems from *Kumukanda* and *A Blood Condition*

  Chingonyi was born in Zambia and raised in the UK. His poetry reflects on living in the globalized, multicultural UK. He's particularly attuned to the connections between music and poetry.

Week 4 (July 21-23)

Mon | Thinking in Two Languages: English & Shaetlan

- Roseanne Watt, selected poems from *Moder Dy*

  Watt was raised in the Shetland Islands north of mainland Scotland. Her poetry moves between English and the local Scots dialect, Shaetlan. She includes what she calls her own "uneasy translations" of her Shaetlan poems.

Tues | What does it mean to be British today?

- Zaffar Kunial, "Poppy" from *Us*

  Kunial was born to a white, English mother and a Pakistani father. His verse engages with questions of finding one's own identity when it draws from multiple cultures and traditions.

Wed | What does it mean to be British today?

- Zaffar Kunial, selected poems from *Us*

Week 5 (July 28-30)

Mon | Dear Hearing World

- Raymond Antrobus, "Dear Hearing World" from *Perseverance*

  Antrobus is closely connected with the spoken word community in London. He is of Jamaican and English heritage and is Deaf. His debut collection Perseverance *explores his intersectional challenges to identity formation.*

Tues | All the Names Given

- Raymond Antrobus, selected poems from *Perseverance* and *All the Names Given*

Wed | Concluding Presentations

Additional Course Information

Academic Integrity. You are expected to observe the [UC San Diego Academic Integrity Policy](#) in this course. *Plagiarism is the attributing work to yourself that you did not do.* In order to maintain integrity in the course, cases of plagiarism that affect the fair assessment of student academic performance based upon the course learning objectives, course policies, and assignment instructions will be referred to the Academic Integrity Office for assessment and potential disciplinary action. The course learning objectives can be summarized as developing skills in reading and writing as modes of critical thinking. Accordingly, examples of activity that constitute plagiarism in this course include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Using generative artificial intelligence (e.g. large-language models like ChatGPT) to generate the structure, ideas, or language of your work.
- Using secondary sources to generate the structure, ideas, or language of your essay. In the Humanities Program, you are to write essays based only on your own study of the assigned materials, not on secondary sources.
- Submitting the same essay for more than one assignment or class.
- Allowing another individual to assume one's identity for the purpose of enhancing one's grade.

Students agree that by taking this course all required work will be subject to text-similarity review through Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism.

Assignments are subject to automatic failure if a student fails to respond within a week of when the professor requests a meeting to discuss an assignment or is unable to explain the content of their work.

Copyright. All course material is the intellectual property of the professor. Lectures, PDFs of the course material, and your assignments and course notes are for personal use only. Any reproduction or distribution of the course material without permission is prohibited and will be considered an act of academic dishonesty that is referred to the Academic Integrity Office.

Inclusion. I value an inclusive and equitable classroom environment in which everyone shows respect to each other as persons and scholars. If you need accommodation for religious reasons, please contact me as soon as possible so that the appropriate arrangements can be made.

OSD Accommodations will be provided with a written request. Please provide me with your AFA letter prior to departure. Work through the Office for Students with Disabilities.